592 /30 cont'd/
594 seems to be more prevalent. It is not uncommon to see a Miao
596 family of eight to ten people, of three generations, father, son, grandson, living in a single thatched hut.

592 A family at the least consists of a man, his wife, and their
593 children. The father is, of course, the head of the family, who is
562 in charge of the affairs of the whole family. Every member of the family must obey his directions in everyday family work, and even in personal behavior each receives his concern. For instance, in the
[582 marriage of sons and daughters, although free choice as the basis of
584] marriage is permitted in many cases, there are also many marriages which are arbitrarily determined by the head of the family. In the latter case, the children have no way of raising objections. Generally, the father in a Miao family is more powerful and respected than he is in a Li family.

593 There is a big difference in another aspect, the position of the
171 man and woman in the family. The Miao women are submissive. From what I have heard, this is completely different from the manner of the Li women. It is easy for a Miao husband to give orders to his wife while the Li husband is unable to do so. However,
595 it is rather strange that polygamy is completely forbidden among the Miao. Regardless of whether he is wealthy or not, or whether he has a son /31/ or not, a Miao husband can never take a second wife (i.e. concubine), unless his first wife has died. For instance, the Miao headman, Lu Tsun-ying, is generally considered to be wealthy and influential. He is already fifty years old and is still without an heir, but he has no intention of taking a concubine. We have not yet been able to point out clearly the background which has created this kind of rule. The following two points may serve as possible explanations. In the first place, the Miao have only a
[182] limited area of land, and it is hard for them to make a living on it. Forbidding concubinage may serve to avoid the problem of overpopu-
[582] lation. Secondly, they have strictly followed the rule of marriage within the group (i.e., a Miao may only marry a Miao). But the entire Miao population is not very large. In order to maintain a balance between the male and female population, monogamy must

Chapter VI. Customs and Practices

1. Birth

852 Twelve days after the birth of a Miao child, his family always holds a "twelfth-day" celebration for him; after a month there is a "first-month" celebration. The family kills chickens and cook meat. They ask a Taoist priest to come to pray for him and name him. 651 The child is usually named "Ya Ta" /Ya the Elder/ or "Ya Erh" /Ya the Second/, etc. There is also a celebration of his first birthday, but the way it is celebrated is unknown to me.

2. Marriage

582 The Miao are generally betrothed when they are about twenty years old. Betrothals are either made through the decision of the ●584 parents and the advice of go-betweens, or they are made after a couple have fallen in love and ask the parents for permission and the consultation of a go-between. In the latter case, the parents always respect their children's wishes. According to Miao custom, however, before the formal betrothal, the hour, day, month, and year of birth of the young couple (these are entered in the family registers) must be "compared" by someone who is able to read the almanac well [622 (generally a chia-ch'ang). If their horoscopes are in harmony with 787] each other and are not contradictory to those of the parents of both families, they are formally betrothed; otherwise, they must give each other up. Therefore, even if a couple are deeply in love and the match is approved of by the parents, if, unfortunately, their horoscopes are not "harmonious," they cannot marry. Many tragedies of lovers have resulted therefrom. 583 Betrothal presents consist of [431] about 20 dollars (previously 10 dollars or less), three jars of wine, three pecks of rice, and 30 catties of pork. There are two types of marriage: one is the ch'ü-hsi, in which the betrothal presents are 583 given by the bridegroom's /47/ family; the other is the chao-chui 591 /literally, "to call a son-in-law," a marriage in which the son-in-608 law comes to live in the wife's family/ in which the betrothal presents are given by the bride's family.

/70/

Chapter VIII. Songs and Legends

(1)

533 Singing is an important aspect of Miao life. Regardless of sex and age, almost all of them are talented singers. When we were traveling in the Miao mountains, the clear voices of Miao singers always struck our ears. In the deep woods of the high mountains with no one in sight, it usually gave us the poetic feeling that,

"The singing has ended; no one is in sight;
Only some mountain peaks remain green above the river."

831 152 533 Singing is the most natural medium of communication between human hearts. The Miao have made full use of it. When a man and woman fall in love, they sing to each other in order to express their mutual admiration. Inexpressibly happy at a reunion after a long separation, they sing to each other to express their happiness. Bidding farewell at a crossroad, they sing to express their sorrow at parting. Worn out during the busy seasons of agricultural work, they sing for physical relaxation. On festive occasions, they sing to add to the gaiety. In short, all their emotions—misery and happiness, grief and joy—are frankly expressed by singing.

533 Usually they sing their songs in dialogue style—such as between a man and a woman or between a host and a guest, etc. Due to long use, many of the songs have become formalized, so that the words of the replies are fixed. The ability to sing is very important in Miao social relations. For instance, their marriage is usually 581 based upon love. And singing is the principal means of courting.

533 /71/ On the fine spring days, Miao boys and girls usually go out in groups to sing to one another on the neighboring slopes. As the singers gradually draw closer, at this point, if you are a talented singer capable of answering your counterpart in the proper way, 533 victory will be yours. Otherwise, if the singing beauties move [571] away because of poor answers, how depressed you would feel! At a fine banquet, when the hosts and guests sing alternately to each other, the good singers are always admired by the audience while

/102 cont'd/

539 Mr. Chang lived in a place both high and low.
He lived in a place named Chang Pai Ch'ang.
The family had three thousand strings of cash .
East, west, south, and north they had established farms.
/103/ Mr. Chang had no son but had two daughters.
The two of them made a couple, which excelled any son:
The elder daughter was named Precious Gem;
And the younger one was named Chang Meng-wo.
The elder one had natural skill in weaving thin brocade embroidery;
The younger one had natural skill in weaning silk gauze.
They wove the Yellow River with nine turns.
They wove ducks and drakes paired with male and female phoenixes.
They wove male and female unicorns paired with lions.
They wove fierce tigers paired with leopards.
When their needlework was compared,
The tapestry was no better than the silk gauze.
Everything that was woven by them was real:
It is good art to write like the teacher and to render the tiger real.
● 594 The elder daughter was married at eighteen to a secretary of state.
539 The younger at fifteen left her parents.
When Meng-wo was about seventeen or eighteen,
She had never stepped outside the front door.
Now in the Upper Village there was a knowledgable old woman named Huang,
She wrote out young girls' fortunes and acted as a go-between.
She wrote out fortunes in all the chous /districts/.
In the nine chous and ten districts /hsien/, she was without parallel in this.
She came then to try her book, at the house of the young gentleman Yen,
Who was highly literate and knew the Three-Character Classic by heart.

/103 cont'd/

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584

People say it was in the third month when flowers bloom in wild profusion.
The two sisters wanted to go out to look at the fragrant flowers.
This morning they did now know what their fate would be during the year.
The two bowed deeply and said:
"If you, father and mother, give us the word,
We 'll go back to comb and dress ourselves.
/104/ If you, father and mother, do not give us permission,
We shall not dare go out the door."
Their father and mother replied:
"Listen to what we say, daughters,
When you go, take your horoscopes.
Go together and come home early, both of you."
Upon these words from the mouths of their father and mother,
They went to comb and dress themselves up for the trip.
Their hairdo had been in the style of a coiling dragon's moustache;
Now they made one of the style named "Looking for a Husband."
They looked in the bronze mirror placed in front of them.
Their faces were like that of the young girl of the village in the Peach Paradise.
Long and short golden hairpins were inserted all over the hair,
Well stuck in on the four sides, high and up.
They walked like Kuan Yin /Goddess of Mercy/ when about to come out from the sea,
And sat like the immortal of the village in the Peach Paradise.
Passing through the east street to the south street,
Across the west street and back from the north street,
And at the crossroads and thoroughfares,
Their looks excelled that of all the people in the whole district of Tuan-lieh.
The district of Tuan-chou did not have /sic/ thousands and tens of thousands,

/104 cont'd/

539
584 But only Meng-wo's looks stood out.
Walking further they came to a flower garden village.
Behold, flowers flourished on the trees,
They saw tender peach blossoms just opened up.
Half of the leaves on the trees were green, and the other half yellow.
Yellow bees pierced the flowers in pairs,
Butterflies sojourned on trees in couples.
Yen Hui, attired in finely embroidered silk and satin,
Passed by on horseback and saw Meng-wo.
/105/ "Little girl, whose family do you come from?
What do your father and mother call you?"
Meng-wo replied to Yen Hui,
"Hsiu tsai*, please listen to my words.

/* A graduate of the former first degree in the Chinese examination system./

My father is called Elder Chang,
He produced me as the little girl named Chang Meng-wo.
May I inquire hsiu tsai's honorable name?
What is your order in the family?"
Yen Hui replied to Meng-wo, saying:
"Beautiful one, please listen to my words,
I am the third son of the Hui family.
I have come here to have a look at the flowers."
They did not dare to tarry too long in the garden of flowers,
They returned to their respective homes.
Their affinity had been set in a previous life.
Now they met as drake and duck.
Returning home and sitting in his private room,
Yen Hui began to think in his heart,
During the day he thought endlessly and did not eat.
At night he thought endlessly and could not sleep.
Mr. Yen, hearing of his son's tears,

/105 cont'd/

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Talked the matter over with his wife.
"We have brought you up to an adult, Yen Hui.
A man's life is like the autumn grass."
Yen Hui immediately replied:
"Father, please listen to my words.
If you want me to marry someone, don't choose a girl from another family.
I wish to take pretty Chang Meng-wo."
To this Mr. Yen immediately replied:
"My son, please listen to my words.
/106/ Man and wife are predestined in the previouls life.
What is regulated in the previous life determines a couple.
If it is predestined, you will meet each other.
If it is not predestined, the two of you will part."
Yen Hui replied to his father and mother,
"Father, listen to my words.
If I can have the Chang family's daughter,
I am willing to die on the third day."
Hearing these words, Mr. Yen began to think in his heart.
The next morning he called for the old woman Huang.
And asked the old woman Huang to act as go-between.
He asked that the old woman Huang hurry,
And go to the house of Chang to act as go-between.
She went to Mr. Chang's and sat in the doorway.
Mr. Chang invited her into the upper hall.
And asked the old woman Huang to sit down in the upper hall.
Tea and boiling soup were prepared in the kitchen.
After the tea came and before they had drunk three cups,
Then the old woman Huang began to talk.
"What have you come here about, old woman Huang?"
The old woman Huang blushed as she was about to speak.
Mr. Chang said to the old woman Huang:
"Whatever you have to say, please do so freely."
The old woman Huang replied to Mr. Chang:
"Please listen to my words.

/106 cont'd/

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People say that your family has a daughter,
Who is now at the proper age of eighteen."
Mr. Chang replied to the old woman Huang:
"If the horoscopes are in harmony, then a union may be made."
/107/ The old woman Huang replied to Mr. Chang, saying:
"There are also the betrothal gifts which should come in pairs
of gold and silver."
Mr. Chang replied to the old woman Huang, saying:
"Please listen to my words.
First, there must be five hundred strings of copper coins.
Second, there must be three pecks of pearls.
Third, there must be fifty pairs of gold hairpins.
Fourth, there must be fifty pairs of spun silks.
Fifth, there must be fifty pairs of gold hens.
Sixth, there must be ten pairs of dragon geese.
Seventh, there must be fifty pairs of large pigs.
Eighth, there must be fifty pairs of silky sheep.
Ninth, there must be thirty-six containers /?/ of wine.
Tenth, there must be silver cups to cover the container tops.
If you can get all these ten gifts,
You can make a match for Meng-wo."
When Yen Hui heard these words,
He immediately began to think in his heart.
Opening up the south storehouse of betrothal gifts,
He took out gold and silver by tens of thousands.
He took out copper coins by the thousand and tens of thousands
strings.
He took out three pecks of pearls.
He took out fifty pairs of gold hairpins.
He took out fifty pairs of spun silks.
He took out fifty pairs of gold hens.
He took out fifty pairs of silky sheep.
He took out fifty pairs of large pigs.
He took out fifty pairs of dragon geese.
He took out thirty-six containers of wine.

/107 cont'd/

539 He took out silver cups to cover the container tops.
●584 /108/ Eight hundred men carried the wealth of gifts,
On the way to the betrothal of Meng-wo.
831 But not half a month after the betrothal was made,
539 Yen Hui fell ill and lay on the high bed.
First they wrote a letter reporting that he was ill.
Second they wrote a letter reporting that he was dead.
The letter arrived while she was eating.
Tears blowed in her eyes, dropping in pairs.
She put down her chopsticks and read the message.
Read it once, then read it again.
In the message there were no idle words.
There was but sad news that the two were parted.
Meng-wo undid her coiling dragon hairdo and put on the mourning sign.
She took off the gold hairpins and put them inside the dragon box.
Mr. Chang went to the Upper Village to borrow a big horse;
Meng-wo went to the Lower Village and borrowed a sedan chair.
Mr. Chang mounted the horse and went with bowed head.
Meng-wo was behind him still proud and fine.
Mr. Chang turned his head and scolded his daughter:
"Whose family ever brought up a girl to go looking for a man?"
Meng-wo answered her father, saying:
"I am going to the house of Yen to burn filial incense.
Where has there ever been an ox yoked with two yokes?
A horse saddled with two saddles?
A bow fitted with two arrows?
Or a girl who married two husbands?
It is difficult for a horse with two saddles to carry passengers on his back.
A girl married to two men would be the laughing stock of all."
They arrived and were seated in the main hall of the house of Yen.

M /19 cont./
*101 (4) Yeh T'ou Miao. — This group also belongs to the He
CC Miao. When a girl is married, she must marry the son of her
563 maternal uncle. If the latter has no son, he must be given
M presents of ornaments and money. Otherwise she may not
[582] get married at all.

(5) Tung Tsai Miao. — They are not as numerous as the Yeh T'ou Miao, and live in separate villages. The Yeh
M Tou villages are known as the Big Villages and the Tung Tsai
[628] ones as the Small Villages, the latter being subservient to the
[582] former. Marriage is restricted to their own villages. A secret
[502] marriage to a member of a big village is a violation. The Tung Tsai are good boatmen. In Mi-no these are such tribemen.

M (6) Pa Chai Miao. — This group is also a part of the He
[345] Miao. Near the village is provided an empty shed, where un-
[533] married men and women gather together to sing. If a couple
[517] fall in love, a cow is sent as a betrothal gift. One or two days
[584] after marriage the girl goes back home and still asks for money
[583] from her husband. If the money is not given she may marry again. In Ya-yu this custom still exists today.

/20/ (7) Ch'ien /Bamboo Grove/ Miao. — Another
M branch of the He Miao, there are many at Lieh-erh-shan.
[241] They live in dense bamboo groves on the mountain. They are
[262] not good at farming but grow some grain. They consider
[291] hempseed to be food and use hemp for their clothes.

(8) Ch'ing Chiang He Miao /Ch'ing River Black Miao/. —
[882] The unmarried men are called "lohan" and the unmarried
[527] women, "laopei." In the spring they carry wine and food up
[584] the mountain, singing and dancing reciprocally. Those who
[851] become fond of each other drink from an ox horn and get married. After a son is born, they then say they have a
[167] descendant, and begin to be willing to work in the field.

(9) Pe /White/ Miao. — They originated in Kwei-ting
[291] and Lung-li in Kweichow. They esteem white clothes, go
[302] bareheaded and barefooted, and coil up their hair with crude
[782] hairpins. A big bull is selected for the ancestral sacrifice.
[769]

M
*101 /20 cont./
CC
563 in the villages around Shang-shih-li. Men learn trades and women weave and embroider. Unmarried people often gather together for moon parties out in the open, at which men beat
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[167 the monkey drums and women sing in accompaniment. It is
462 said that over 600 of Ma San-pao's soldiers remained as husbands
517 who lived in their wives families. Consequently they are also
533 called the Six Hundred Untamed Miao.

167 (14) Hsi-Ch'i Miao. — Formerly most of these lived in
291 Chi-an-p'ing. The women's skirts do not cover the knees,
583 and they wrap the legs with green cloth. Unmarried men and
577 women have drinking parties in the open to find mates. After
584 a son is born, a cow is given as a bridal gift /to the girl's family/.

167 (15) P'ing Fa Miao. — Originally they were from Kuei-
782 ting hsien in Kweichow, and some of them also lived in P'ing-
574 ch'a-szu in Szechwan. Today, many of this tribe are also
291 found at Pai-liao. They like to kill dogs to make sacrifices
302 to the spirits or to entertain guests. The men wear straw wraps
167] and short skirts; the women wear long skirts and bind their hair into a knot.

/21/ (16) Tung Miao. — They originally came from
M
291] Lung-li and Ch'ing-p'ing in Kweichow. Today, they are still numerous in the villages of Liu-li. The men wrap their heads with cotton prints and wear light-blue short garments. The
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527 women wear green embroidered cotton garments with very
782 tight sleeves. Every mid-autumn festival they make sacrifices
769 to their ancestors and dead clan members, and invite a sorcerer
776] to their homes. They place food and wine on a wooden board, and calling out the spirits' names they dance and sing. (The spirits have such names as Pao-t'ung, Po-ch'a, Po-chi, etc.) What is commonly called "K'ou-ch'e seven maidens and the cursed spirits" in this sub-prefecture are both remains of this custom.

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531 (17) Hua /Flower/ Miao. — In Ya-yu and Ya-pao there
386 are many of this tribe. The clothes they wear are first covered with designs in wax, and then dyed. After the dyeing, the wax is washed out and the designs appear.

/93 cont./
551 adopted their ways. Among the Shih /"rock"/ and Lung /"dragon"/ there are the Ta /"big"/ Shih and Shao /"small"/ Shih, the Ta Lung and Shao Lung. Shao Shih is also written with the character shih meaning "time," and Shao Lung, also with the character lung meaning "eminent." Although they 582 have surnames, they do not have a closely knit organization [614] of family clans, and so formerly they did not object to marriage between people of the same surname. However, no marriage [177] was permitted between close relatives. In recent years they have come under Chinese influence, and know that people of [551] the same surnames must not marry. Shao Shih /"small rock"/ was changed to be written with the character shih meaning "time," and Shao Lung /"small dragon"/ was changed to be written with the character lung meaning "eminent," in order to separate them from Ta Shih /"big rock"/ and Ta Lung /"big dragon"/, so that they could intermarry. Today, Miao family 177 life has become more and more like that of the Chinese, and 594 marriage and funeral rites largely follow Chinese customs, 764 barely retaining remnants of some Miao customs.

(2) Marriage

836 /94/ Among the Miao the premarital sex life of the young men and women is rather free. When a virgin has intercourse with a man, her parents know about it but do not forbid it. On the contrary, they consider this evidence that the man finds their daughter desirable. Sometimes, the girl brings home her lover, and her parents will kill a chicken to entertain him. [345] There are even public houses set up specially for the use of young men and women to gather together. For instance, in Chapter II reference was made to the Pa Chai Miao, recorded in Yung-sui T'ing Chih, to the effect that an empty shed was built near the village, where unmarried men and women gathered [584] together to sing. If a couple fell in love, a cow was sent as a 517 betrothal gift. Again, the unmarried men among the Ch'ing [533] Chiang He Miao were called "lohan"; in the spring they would

/94 cont./

836 517 [533] [535] carry wine and food up the mountain, singing and dancing reciprocally. Those who became fond of each other would drink from an ox horn. There is the custom among the Miao of dancing for the new year, dancing for the moon, and singing for autumn. On such occasions, young men and women form groups and sing in response to each other all night until daybreak. After singing they mix with each other, drinking and joking, even to the extent of having sexual relations. This is called fang yeh "going wild."

582 [584] Although unmarried men and women are free to fall in love, marriage, however, requires parental consent as well as the approval of the maternal uncle of the girl. The He Miao of Ch'ing Chiang, Kweichow have a marriage custom where they betroth the daughter of a paternal aunt to be the daughter-in-law of a maternal uncle. Should the maternal uncle have no son, the girl's family has to pay a large sum of money to him. Without such a payment the girl all her life may not marry. The Miao, other than close paternal cousins not being suitable mates, they do not object to marriage between people of the same surname. However, maternal cousins may not marry. 582 611 This is a survival from a matrilineal society, because in a matrilineal society maternal cousins have the same surname whereas cross cousins or male and female first cousins on the father's side have different surnames. That maternal cousins cannot marry is evidence of their advance from a matrilineal society to a patrilineal society. The importance of the maternal uncle's position in sacrificial ceremonies as well as in the society is additional evidence.

584 583 The former marriage customs of the Miao were slightly different from their present ways. Yung-sui T'ing Chih says: "Miao marriage is just like a purchase. They do not follow the /Chinese/ custom of asking names (as a preliminary to fixing a betrothal) and sending presents to the bride's home to fix the betrothal. They only negotiate about the number of horses and cattle through a broker. The broker is a Miao marriage go-between. It definitely requires five or six horses or heads 000 of cattle to initiate a trade for one wife. When the agreement

/94 cont./ When the agreement
585 is reached an inauspicious /sic/ day is chosen to welcome the
[292] wife. The bride wears a moon-white gown and walks holding a parasol, half open, half shut, called the shame-hiding parasol. Her father and mother, brothers, and relatives escort her to
[583] the husband's house. The dowry consists of everything from cattle and sheep and goats to plows and harrows. They do not enter by the main door but through a hole bored through a wall. Men and women sit together. The bride is not allowed to look left or right, or else the husband would be displeased for fear that shermay be fond of some one else. The couple takes each a bowl of rice, a piece of fish, and a cup of wine dregs. Next they visit the paternal uncles' houses in the same village, at each eating and drinking the same items. On their return home they are husband and wife, but they do not spend the night to-
[582] gether." It also says: "The Miao do not object to marriage between people of the same surname, but relatives do not marry. On the wedding night the bride sleeps with her mother, who leaves only when the groom gives her some silver as a gift /95/, called the "mother's money" or "milk money." It is generally about two or three liang of silver. A wealthy family,
556 seeing a pretty girl, might order their son to drag the girl from
583 behind. This is called "carrying off a woman and marrying
584 her by force." The girl's family attracted by their wealth, do not engage the girl to anyone else, but get a go-between to discuss betrothal presents. When a virgin has an affair with
836 a man, her parents know about it but do not forbid it. On the contrary, they consider this evidence that the man finds her
684 desirable. But, if one's wife or concubine is seduced, then
[837] they raise knives, facing each other, and money is required as compensation. If a husband and wife do not get along,
586 the husband may divorce her and marry again, and the wife may do the same. As to improper sexual conduct, instances
837 were very rare even in former days, and today the Miao have become more aware of ethical and moral obligations." (What is recorded in the Miao Fang Pei Lan is to the same effect.)

/95 cont./

584 [177] Today, the marriage customs of the Miao have been thoroughly influenced by the Chinese and have changed from the old ways. Boys and girls who like each other return home and tell their parents. The boy's family finds a go-between to approach the girl's family to discuss marriage. Once, twice, and sometimes three or four times, such approaches may be made before an agreement is reached. Having had indications of assent from the girl's family, the go-between goes back to report to the boy's family, who get ready two bottles of wine [556] (a wealthy family would send a long two chin of meat and two chin of noodles besides the wine). The gifts are carried back by the go-between to the girl's family, who invite him to drink wine and eat noodles. Where this procedure has been gone through then they reckon it to be the preliminary engagement, which in the Miao language is called (ɣaŋ˧ tɛ˧ mpʰa˧), meaning "to let the girl go," also translated as /Chinese/ fang k'ou "to let go the mouth /door?/."

After the preliminary engagement a period of time is allowed to elapse. Then the ceremony of sticking in incense [782] has to take place, which is called /soŋ˧ tʰiɤ˧/, with the meaning of /Chinese/ na ts'ai, i.e. the sending of gifts to the bride's home and fix the betrothal. The date is selected by the boy's family, who then informs the girl's family. The gifts generally [583] consist of 50 or 60 strings of cash, one outfit of clothing, a pair of earrings, a pair of bracelets, a few boxes of rice cakes, two chin of sweetmeats, two packages of firecrackers , one chin of oil, one chin of salt, a jug of wine, and several chin of meat. The quantity of the foregoing gift items depends largely upon [556] the financial condition of the boy's family. Poor families may [583] omit a few items, but money, clothes, rings, bracelets, firecrackers, wine, meat, incense and candles are necessary items. These gifts are carried by the brothers of the future groom, followed by the go-between, the future groom, and his father, to the girl's family. Sometimes, the future groom may not go. When the gifts arrive at the door to the house, firecrackers are set off, and the party is received outside the door by the clan

/95 cont./

584 brothers in the girl's family. After entering the door and a brief
[782] rest, the ceremony of sticking incense before the ancestral tablet of the girl's family begins. The groom kowtows three times. If he is not present, his father kowtows in his place. If the groom is present he must also kowtow to his future father-in-law, mother-in-law, and other elders. If the girl's family
[556] is wealthy, then a pig will be killed to entertain the guests from the groom's family. The guests remain in the girl's family
574 for three days, during which the immediate relative of the
584 girl's family take turns in entertaining them with meals, called "meals from door to door." The closest relatives must enter-
[264] tain the visitors at breakfast, because breakfast is considered the most important meal in the Miao countryside. For instance, say there are six families, A, B, C, D, E, and F, with A and C being the closest relatives. Dinner on the first evening is given by the host family. /96/ breakfast on the second day is given by family A, lunch by family E, and dinner by family B. On the third day breakfast is given by family C, lunch by family F, and dinner by family D. When the guests are seen off on the fourth day, breakfast is given by the host family. As a rule three meals are served in a day, but when there are a large
[264] number of /clan/ brothers there are five or six meals in one day.
583 After breakfast on the fourth day the guests depart. Return
584 presents from the girl's family consist of a suit of clothes, a pair of shoes, and a hat for the future son-in-law, a piece of material for a pair of trousers for each guest, a pair of shoes each for the parents of the groom, and a pig's leg for the go-between.

585 A few months or half a year before the marriage the go-
787 between visits the girl's family to ask for the date and time
777 of her birth. He must bring with him two or four strings of cash
584 and some sweetmeats. This ceremony is called "asking for the lucky birth date." The girl's birth date and time thus obtained are matched with those of the groom in order to pick an auspicious day for the wedding. The date is communicated to
583 the girl's family through the go-between. They then begin to

4:Mickey E-5 (1940-?) 1947 AE5 Miao AE5

year began. During this period there was time for weddings, visits to other villages to "drink wine," and celebrate such events as *tso chia*,[8] and bullfights.[9] One bullfight was held at Hsin-ch'ang in Kuei-ting Hsien on the tenth of the eighth month (September 19), another at Yang-chia-sai on the tenth of the ninth month (October 19). A bride went from Yang-chia-sai on the sixth of the tenth month (November 13). On the third of the tenth month (November 10) several girls went to the village into which a girl from Yang-chia-sai had been married two years before, to celebrate *tso chia* with her in her new home. A girl was married into the village on the fifth of the eleventh month (December 12) and the old man's son took a second wife on the twenty-third of the second month of the next year (March 28, 1943).

Of course, even though this was perhaps the slackest season of the year, there was still much to be done in the way of cultivation of fields and gardens, and the bringing in of fuel against the period of almost complete leisure during the first lunar month. On sunny days grain had to be brought out and sunned, and some of that stored in sheaves sunned in the sheaves, beaten out into the wooden box, against an upturned millstone, or with the flail, dried, and stored. In preparation for the entertainment of guests, for the New Year feasts of the household, and that as little time as possible in the first month need be spent in preparing food, much time was also used in the making of glutinous rice cakes, rice wine, bean curd, cured and smoked pork, and sausage. The harvest had been abundant and the family could afford some new clothing, that those who attended bullfights and feasts might look their best and be a credit to the family. White cloth was purchased in the piece and dyed before being made up. All clothing and bedding, the houses, and their surroundings were cleaned and set in order. This is the agricultural calendar, followed year after year.

Implements and Technique. The technique of farming was identical with that of Chinese and Chung-chia of the neighborhood.

[8] See p. 51, note 2.
[9] See pp. 56 ff.

534 pipes. These were of different lengths and fitted into the upper surface of a box longer than wide, which had a mouthpiece at the other end from the pipes. The player held the box in both hands and swayed as he played, with much vigor. The pitch of the *lu sheng* varied with the length of the pipes, some being high and flutelike, others deep and like an organ. The name has been translated "six-reed organ." All the young people liked to sing and had sweet, natural voices.

533 They also made tunes on leaves and were said to be able to send messages in this way.
534 Among other Miao this was courting music,
584 accompanied by words. It seemed to be so here. I was told that during the time a wedding party was in the groom's village they spent the night singing songs. I heard them do so when they were together on the night after a bullfight. Children were taught songs as babies and I once came upon little ones in the wood, sitting on a fallen log with bowed heads in their hands, as they sang the lament. When they saw me they laughed and stopped. One of the shamanesses knew many songs.

584 Betrothal. Miss Li said that the arrangements for betrothal were initiated through a middleman and that two of exactly the same surname might not marry. Of the weddings which took place while I was in contact with them the ages of the principals were as follows: boy thirteen, girl twelve; boy fourteen, girl thirteen; boy sixteen, girl twenty; boy and girl both eighteen. In each case they had been betrothed some years before, which would indicate that arrangements were made by the parents, though the young people probably were acquainted.

585 Wedding (fig. 20, *c*, *e*). Weddings were set for any part of the leisure season, from the tenth to the second lunar months. On the day before the lucky day chosen for the wedding the man's family sent two or three young men to receive the bride. In the two cases of girls from our village, the groom himself was one of these. They stayed all night in the bride's village and returned to his village next day, accompanied by the bride and her attendants, men bearing gifts of food, men bearing the girls' more ordinary clothing, and once a boy of about the same age as the groom from the bride's village.

7: Clarke M-3 (no date) 1911 AE5 Miao AE5

764 782 the oxen killed among them are killed as offerings to their ancestors or to demons. We were never able to buy beef among the Heh Miao, though they killed oxen two or three times a month, because they were all used as offerings to the dead or to demons, and the Miao Christians did not think it right to eat such beef.

782 796 The Ya-ch'io Miao sacrifice to Heaven and Earth once a year. They offer an ox to Heaven and a pig to Earth. They have a big sacrifice once in thirteen years, when they sacrifice buffaloes to Heaven. On this occasion every family is expected to kill a buffalo, so sometimes several tens of buffaloes are killed in one village. They also sacrifice to their ancestors. These offerings and sacrifices to ancestors are not made from love, we imagine, so much as fear. They think if they do not offer these sacrifices, the spirits of their ancestors will come and bring calamities upon them.

584 Marriage among the Miao is arranged much the same as among the Chinese, by a match-maker or go-between; but, unlike the Chinese, the match-maker mostly comes upon the scene after the young people have shown a decided preference for one another. The young men and maidens do much of their courting quite openly at the musical festivals, and at the village fairs.

7: Clarke M-3 (no date) 1911 AE5 Miao AE5

584

Very often a couple or a group of young people go out for long walks together. It would be well, for obvious reasons, if there were less of that sort of thing. After living for some time among the Chinese, who are nothing if not conventional, and among whom Mrs. Grundy is well-nigh omnipotent, it is surprising and amusing to visit a Kweichow market among the Miao, and see the lads and lasses frolicking with one another on the street and around the stalls. It reminds one of a country fair at home.

But sometimes, and not infrequently, the girl's parents object to her lover, and from mercenary motives arrange a marriage without consulting the inclinations of the young people. The price paid for a wife among the Miao is usually from thirty to sixty Mexican dollars. These mercenary marriages nearly always prove a miserable failure, and lead to numerous daughter-in-law disputes. Not that those marriages which are the result of mutual liking are always happy. We imagine that many, perhaps one-half of the Miao women over thirty years of age, have been married once or twice to men who are now living, before they settled down with the man they now call their husband.

We know one girl who left her first husband because she did not like him. After her parents

7: Clarke M-3 (no date) 1911 AE5 Miao AE5

584 had repaid the money the husband's family had expended on the marriage, she married again, and now seems settled and contented with her husband and two or three children. Another woman we know was betrothed when a girl to a man who left home for awhile, and while he was away her parents married her to another. When the man to whom she had been betrothed came back and claimed her, the man who had married her gave her up, and she became the wife of the other. We know another young woman, not yet thirty, who is subject to epileptic fits, who has been married half-a-dozen, perhaps a dozen, times. When her new husband discovers she is subject to these fits, he sends her home again and does not want her.

585 After a marriage has been arranged, a day is fixed for the receiving of the bride. The kinsfolk and friends of both parties are invited, a room is cleared out—sometimes it is the cow-house, which is really a part of the dwelling-house—and seats put all round against the wall for the guests. The guests all make presents to the bridegroom's family—rice, or jars of whisky, and sometimes silver. These contributions to their host considerably diminish the cost of the marriage feast. The bride, who walks from her

8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5

Men sometimes amuse themselves by going hunting together, generally in the winter time when there is less work to do. Both men and boys play shuttlecock at New Year time. The shuttlecock is often made by fastening feathers to a piece of bamboo. Sometimes the shuttlecock is kicked but more often it is knocked back and forth by means of wooden bats. There is a memory game in which the players use grains of corn. One is blindfolded or turns his back and the grains of corn are laid out on the table. Others pick up the grains of corn, a few at a time and say, "So many grains have been picked up. How many are left?" Sometimes, one or two cobs of corn are held in the hand and the players guess how many grains of corn there are on each cob. One game is played by nailing two planks or wooden beams together in the center at right angles to each other and balancing them on a pivot. Four men or boys balance themselves on the four ends of the beams and others rapidly turn around the cross or wheel with the four men on it. "Playing lion" is indulged in at New Year time and at weddings. Two men throw over themselves a cloth resembling a lion's skin. Then the lion fights with a man who always triumphs over the beast. Occasionally friends are invited to a feast where wine and tobacco are the principal means of entertainment. Both men and women smoke tobacco and drink wine but few of them smoke opium.

The Ch'uan Miao are lovers of music and among their principal amusements are singing and playing the *liu shêng* 六笙 or six-tubed wind instrument accompanied with dancing. There is no written language and much of the history and legends or folklore of the group have been made into songs and are passed on from generation to generation. Some of the words in the oldest songs are not understood by the Miao at the present time and many of the young people are not learning the songs so that it is probable that they will be forgotten and lost within the next forty years.

The Ch'uan Miao rarely sing group songs or songs in which men sing one verse and women sing another in response. This is more common among the Hua Miao. Nearly all the songs are sung by one person, a man or a woman, to whom others listen. Sometimes, but rarely, men sing one verse and women sing in response alternating until the song is finished. The songs sung on such occasions are love songs. At engagement ceremonies the middle men of the bride and the middle men of the groom sing alternately, sometimes ridiculing and sometimes praising each other. These songs and their tunes have been composed and handed down to subsequent generations for hundreds and perhaps thousands of years and they

8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5

584

Sexual attraction naturally results in love affairs and love affairs naturally result in sexual intercourse. Sometimes this results in marriage but often it does not.

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Children are often married at a very early age. It is not uncommon for a child to be married when only three or four years old and most children are married by the time they are twelve. Of course these are not love matches, and serious love affairs later in life with men and women to whom they are not married are quite likely to occur.

584

The normal way is for engagements to be made by the parents of the boy through go-betweens. The initiative is taken by the parents of the young man. When they have decided that they wish to make an engagement between their son and a certain girl, they call two go-betweens who are invited to a meal in the boy's home. A chicken is killed for the meal and its tongue, its bones and other parts of its body are examined to ascertain whether or not the circumstances are propitious.

If the signs are propitious, the middle men proceed to the home of the girl. There they endeavor to secure a favorable reply from the girl's parents who in turn call in go-betweens. If her parents are favorable, the go-betweens are feasted and they proceed to determine the details of the gift which must be given by the boy's parents to those of the girl. The gift may include pork, domestic animals, rice, beans, corn, money, or any other commodity. When the engagement presents have been given and accepted by the girl's parents, the engagement is complete and is seldom broken. There is a second feast for the go-betweens and other friends at the time when the engagement gifts are presented. The engagement is a contract between the parents of the young people. While the bride is not actually purchased, the value of the gift often goes a long way towards securing a favorable decision by the girl's parents.

When the go-betweens arrive at the home of the girl much of the work of making the engagement is often done by means of songs. By certain songs they announce their mission to the girl's parents. Other songs carry the work along, even to the matter of approximately arranging the gift. There are songs when the gifts are presented. Sometimes these songs take the form of contests when the two sets of go-betweens ridicule or try to outwit each other or see who can keep going the longest.

When the parents are unwilling to marry off a daughter, or nobody seeks her hand in marriage, or when the parents are unable or fail to make an engagement for a son, the marriageable person endeavors to win a mate. For this purpose he or she goes to the market place on the third day of the third moon, at *tuan yang* 端陽 on the fifth day of the

8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5

584 fifth moon, or at some other convenient time, or attends one of the Miao feasts or festivals, or joins those playing on the mountain-sides at New Year time. Either the boy or the girl can make the first advances. The methods are to look lovingly 584 with the eyes, to squeeze hands and to speak loving words. 833 This is inconvenient if there are many people about. A boy may take a girl's handkerchief or a girl take a boy's. Then the person who gets the handkerchief goes away and the other says, "That person has taken my handkerchief. Stay here and I will go after him (or her)." Then in a quiet secluded place they make love. They say loving words, squeeze each other's hands, and embrace. A very great evidence of love is when one spits and the other swallows the spittal. Copulation often follows after which a handkerchief or a ring may be given by the boy to the girl or *vice versa* and they make a vow such as, "If you do not marry me and marry another, you must take this engagement present and eat it and then I will make no trouble." It is believed by the Ch'uan Miao men that copulation is one of the surest ways to a woman's affection.

584 Later the parents must be informed and they must secure go-betweens and arrange engagement presents and so on. If the parents do not agree, then the young people run away together or the man carries away the girl. Then all the neighbors and friends urge the parents to consent and if they still do not agree the neighbors and friends practically compel them to do so. The gifts to the girl's parents are generally less than they would have been if the young people had been engaged and married in the usual way.

Marriage by capture is not unknown among the Ch'uan Miao. Sometimes the girls are quite willing to get married in this way, and it is said that happy marriages often result. Sometimes a man uses this method because he is in love with the girl.

Parents generally desire to marry off their daughters, for it is the custom of marrying daughters into other homes that makes possible the securing of daughters-in-law to labor in the home and to give birth to descendants. Besides, the girl's parents receive engagement gifts and these are sometimes very valuable.

585 The bride generally weeps before leaving her parental home. Sometimes the sorrow is pretended but at other times she is sad and unwilling to go and the parents and friends and relatives have to use persuasion and even coercion. There is an old custom by which the parents actually push the girl out of the house. It is customary for the girl and her parents to weep, either as a matter of form or because of sincere sorrow.

10: Graham E-5 (1921-?) 1954 AE5 Miao AE5

846 While the couvade is found among the Hua Miao neighbors
837 to the south,

evidence of this practice has yet been found among the Ch'uan Miao. The Ch'uan Miao, however, have a very strange custom: Certain female relatives of the man are his "guest-wives," and certain male relatives of a woman are her "guest-husbands." Without marriage they are allowed to practice sexual relations, and it is not regarded as wrong. In recent years, owing to Christian influence, there have been endeavors to discontinue this practice.

631 The Ch'uan Miao are not a tribe with a political organization that includes
622 the whole group. There are no tribal rulers, but they have local headmen, called *gü leo* or "old clubs," who sometimes cooperate for the common good. These people are an ethnic group bound together by common language, ideals, and customs and by a strong sense of unity. They are very sociable and mutually helpful.

SOCIAL LIFE AND CEREMONIES

517 Practically the only amusements of Ch'uan Miao women and girls are visiting, attending feasts, marriages, funerals, and other ceremonies, listening to people singing songs and watching the men dance and play the *liu sheng*, going to market, making love, and gossiping. They are supposed to use their spare time for sewing and making hemp thread and yarn and embroideries.

526 Among the more popular amusements of men and boys are hunting, kicking
536 the shuttlecock, and playing "snake protecting her eggs," blindman's buff, sham
273 battle, or dogs chasing wild animals. During the New Year holidays and at
276 weddings "playing lion" is a popular amusement. Both men and women smoke tobacco and drink wine. While the Miao have no theatricals, they often join the throngs and look at Chinese plays being performed in temples or in the open in Chinese towns and cities.

533 Like the other Miao groups in China, the Ch'uan Miao are lovers of music. Except the singing and the responses of go-betweens while making engagements, in contests between men and women, and in the newly established schools and chapels, there is no group singing. There is a kind of band music, but usually all the instruments play the same tune in unison. Generally the *liu sheng* is played by one man who dances, and vocalists sing one at a time while all listen with rapt attention. This singing of stories and songs is one of the principal amusements of the Ch'uan Miao.

The singing may be by either a man or a woman, generally of middle age or older. Nearly all the stories and myths and bits of history of the group have been made into songs and as such are handed down from generation to generation, taught by one singer to another. Some of the singers know only a few songs, but
212 there are some who know and can sing several hundred. It should be emphasized that the Ch'uan Miao have no written language or literature.

584 There is a great deal of love-making among the Ch'uan Miao, who have their share of pretty girls. Marriage is through go-betweens, and the arrangements are made between the older members of the two families, the bride and the groom often not even being consulted. There is a gift from the parents of the groom to those of the bride, and the value of the gift often determines whether the engagement is made.

[9 cont.]

517 purpose of these festivities is to celebrate in advance a rich harvest, and therefore the participants are numerous, especially the young men and women, who go there in new and pretty clothes with the object of finding a mate. As to moon dance, sitting in the moon, singing or chasing the moon, these are occasions specially designed for love-making by the young.

[533] Both men and women are good singers, and they sing to drown out the sorrows in their chest, as well as to effect a lover's union. Anyone who fails to sing at marriage and funeral ceremonies will surely be disgraced. Singing, in short, is a necessary accomplishment. Within a short distance from the village there

[443] is a level ground for the market fair held once in every six days; this is the center of trade for the Miao-I. On such occasions people gather together at the fair, bustling, loitering and looking around, their heart full of joy and fun. It gives them a respite from their routine toil. Aside from this they are fond of music.

[534] Their musical instruments include the liu-sheng, wu-sheng [five tube bamboo wind instrument, flutes, harmonicas, so-na [a clarinet type wind instrument], brass drums, and p'i-pa [lute]. The liu-sheng is the most common instrument; it is made of bamboo with a gradation of notes resembling that of a military band. Its tune is like the plaintive call of a bird but with a variation of notes. The music accompanies simple dance steps, out of which they derive much pleasure and satisfaction.

4. Ceremonies and Customs

584 1) Marriage. The various Miao-I ethnic groups in Kweichow are rather complicated, but their marriage customs, though varying to a certain extent, are generally the same among different tribes. Marriages are either arranged by parents or the parties themselves, but mostly follow the will of the former and take the advice of the go-between. To negotiate marriage [10] they first discuss gifts and dowries. After marriage the bride goes back to her parents

591 until she is about to give birth to a son. She is then confined to her husband's house. In ancient times, this custom was first

[10 cont.]

591 practiced by one tribe and then followed by others for so long a time that at last it was firmly established. There are only a few couples who are separated. In such cases, they would participate in moon dance, chasing the moon, yao-ma-lang or kan-piao, and other such agencies of free love to seek their mate for a second marriage.

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584 [582] When a boy reaches the age of fourteen or fifteen the parents usually negotiate marriage for him. First, a friend or a relative is asked to approach a girl's family to propose marriage. When the latter family approves, the go-between would bring the boy and his parents over for an interview. If both sides are satisfied, they then start negotiations of gifts and dowry and make arrangements for the engagement. If one side is not satisfied the matter is dropped. This refers to total strangers: between those who are acquainted with each other such arrangements are unnecessary. In the old days the gift and dowry were given in terms of the number of cows instead of money. Recently, they have been changed to silver pieces, and the larger the amount, the more magnificent it is for the girl's family. If the amount is small then the girl's status is considered low and it becomes a disgrace to the family. When the question of the bride price is settled (with the Hua Miao the highest gift comes to $100 or more) the go-between appoints a date to convey it to the girl's family. Accepting the gift, the family gives a feast, in which friends and relatives are invited to keep the go-between company and to regale him with meat and wine. This is the engagement. Before the wedding day, the gift donation must be fully paid up through the go-between; but if the girl's family is fond of the future son-in-law, half or all the bride price may be waived. On the wedding day the bridegroom's family sends along a man and a woman to welcome the bride, and sometimes the groom goes there himself. (But the groom must provide meat and wine as a welcome home feast.) The bride's parents would ask a few young girls to keep the bride company the night before, and before daybreak the party would commence the wedding march, the bride shaded under a bridal parasol. On arrival at the groom's house, the members of the party have to leap across

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[18 cont.]

301 two silver bracelets and two or three finger rings. But when they put on their best embroidered clothes, then they would wear a kind of silver headgear with different kinds of silver pins in the chignon, and at least two or three solid silver necklaces, sometimes as many as a dozen; the number of bracelets and finger rings they wear is also doubled. They would have still more silver jewelry on the dress or attached to the waist. The [556] quantity of silver worn is an index to the wealth of the family, and so during festivals the women become exhibits in every family.

3. Marriage

584 Marriage among the Miao is mostly the result of love, but the mediation of the match-maker and the engagement ceremony are necessary before fixing the date of marriage. Young men and women [19] at the "liu sheng [reed-wind instrument] dance" in the first lunar month may openly fall in love with each other without the intervention of parents or brothers of the family. In ordinary times, especially during the holidays, they may also court each other at will. So on the mountain slope or in the field we often observe scenes of "yao-ma-lang" (i.e., love-making), when they sing songs to each other in questions [583] and answers. One party would ask a question in a song, and if the other party is willing she sings back the answer. These songs are extemporized, full of freedom and naturalness. Such serenades last till sunset when they begin to return home. After a suitable period of time, if their feelings persist then the parents would find a go-between to arrange the engagement.

836 This system of love and marriage seem very free, yet there is no promiscuity. Their conduct is regulated by unwritten laws, and they all have a high sense of decency. For instance, yao-ma-lang is carried on out of sight of old people, and yet it has to be within sight of passers-by. Furthermore, men and women must remain at least five feet apart, and necking and embracing are taboo. (The Long-skirt Miao not far away from them permit

[20 cont.]

539 Little sister thinking of her boy -
In pain;
Big brother thinking of his girl -
Nonchalantly.

IX

After breakfast a cliff we climb,
We throw leaves down the sand-bank,
Fishes are dead, big and small --
Without lover, 'tis never all.

X

The ants climbing a tree do not fear its height,
When you woo a maiden, you fear not another's might.
In love you should not be afraid of death,
Distant Yunnan is so near if you must measure your sword.

584 The engagement procedure is rather simple, and no exchange of "eight characters" [indicating the year, month, day and hour of the birth of betrothed persons] or selection of a lucky date is required. After the approval of the parents, the go-
583 between may formally make arrangements, first bringing over
584 the dowry in the form of a "chao-tai" [visiting belt?] to the boy's home. The return gift from the boy's family, which must now be agreed upon, averages from ten to forty dollars in cash. The boy's family further sends through the go-between a flower patterned cloth parasol for deposit in the girl's family and for use by the future bride when she goes to the husband's house at the time of the wedding. On the day of the engagement the boy's family may not provide a feast, but has to despatch three or four young men carrying to the girl's family wine, glutinous rice, chickens and ducks as well as $3.60, known as "niece's cash." (According to the Miao custom a girl should marry a

[20 cont.] (According to the Miao custom a girl should marry a
583 cousin on the mother's side, and if she is to marry somebody
584 else, she has to give money to her maternal uncle. This money
[582] is called "niece's cash.") The girl's family would then give a feast in honor of the go-between and invite other guests to keep him company.

585 [21] Marriages generally take place during the winter harvest in the second lunar month or the autumn harvest in the tenth lunar month. At that time the groom's family will again despatch three or four young men to the bride's family, carrying nine catties of pork, a package of glutinous rice weighing about two or three catties together with the cash gift negotiated at the time of the engagement. Announcement will also be made of the date for receiving the bride (about twenty days away on a horse day or a cow day). The return gift from the girl's family at the time consists only of a package of glutinous rice and a duck. But on the wedding day the bride's family has to despatch two men early in the morning to send over to the groom's family a slaughtered pig of about fifty to sixty catties and two big baskets, approximately four pecks, of glutinous rice to herald the arrival of the bride. At the wedding march the bride is arrayed in a flowered dress, holding in her hand the flowered parasol, sent previously by the groom's family, and accompanied by eleven male and female relatives. But halfway six of them must retract their steps because grown-up girls may not visit the groom. Among the other five, one young woman acts as the bride's maid and always keeps her company. The groom's family also despatches men to carry wine and rice to meet the bridal party halfway. When the two groups meet they picnic in the field. After this the bride and her kinsmen are conducted to the groom's family.

The bridal chamber is not so well decorated as that of the Chinese, and the furniture in the room is simple and plain.
[352] Except for one or two chests of drawers for the bride's clothes which come as a part of the dowry, the rest is provided by the groom and consists of a bed, a few stools, a wooden face-basin and a foot-basin. Quilts, pillows and mat are also provided by the groom's family. That day the celebration consists of singing

[21 cont.]

585 and drinking, which lasts throughout the night, neither hosts nor guests retiring. That night, the bride and groom do not share the room together. When tired the bride may lie down with the groom's younger sister. The next day the bride and her kinsmen return to her home. After three more days the bride is re-escorted to her husband's family by her brothers and male cousins. After a few days' stay she returns once more to her parents. Thus the wedding ceremony officially terminates. Later, every
591 time the husband wants his wife back he has to send over two or three sheng of glutinous rice to her family, and she will then come back with an escort of her kinsmen. Each year from the second to the eighth lunar month when farm work in her husband's family requires the help of the wife, she often goes over [22] but only for a few days as a guest without participating in housecleaning and cooking. Not until she becomes pregnant does the wife begin normal living with her husband to assume the responsibilities of the mistress of the household. This custom probably is a vestige of the transition from a maternal to a paternal society. In a maternal society the married woman does not leave her parents after marriage. The fact that the Miao woman does not stay with her husband before his child is born is probably due to this tradition. The paternal society lays much emphasis upon offsprings: only those women capable of procreation are considered good wives. The marriage before
583 conception, from the point of view of having heirs, is only
591 experimental. Therefore the wife cannot enjoy all her rights and privileges, and at the same time she may not assume the responsibilities associated with them. The result is a sort of quasi-marriage, that is, marriage in fact but not in form.

586 There are a small number of pre-arranged marriages among the Short-skirt Hê Miao, negotiated by parents when the
[584] parties concerned are mere children. In such a marriage the bride often refuses to go back to her husband's family soon after returning to her own. This kind of girl is allowed to marry again on the condition that her second husband pays indemnity to the first one for expenses which the latter may incur in another

[197 cont.]

527 535 would just cluster around and watch, while others would disperse to sing and joke and play mouth organs. The noises on the slope soon become confused as the festivity wears on. After the dance the old and the middle-aged would form groups to help themselves with refreshments while the young men and women would scatter to the high cliffs and wilderness to sing and talk, such laxity being altogether permissible on this day.

B. The Purposes of the Flower Dance. 1) The Belief in a Prosperous Harvest. The Miao have no other pursuits besides agriculture, and in case of famine there are no means to maintain livelihood. So during the first month when there is a respite between farm activities they hold the flower dance to pray for a bountiful year with an adequate rainfall to bring about a rich harvest in all the grain. This superstitious belief is not only indulged in by the Miao, but shared by the local Chinese as well. Therefore, in case that the Miao themselves cannot maintain order at the dancing slope, the Chinese [198] are always ready to offer help. Sometimes the Chinese are even willing to put up the money for the flower slope and welcome the Miao to the dance as a prosperous harvest benefits all the people concerned.

527 535 241 [648]

2) The Belief in the Acquisition of a son. The Miao of the area believe firmly that the flower dance facilitates childbirth. So at the dance one often sees couples wearing unembroidered jackets with blankets on their back for, it is said, after the flower dance the conception of a child is most likely. There are also couples who after being childless for a long time, welcome the flower tree to their house and give feasts at great expense to entertain visitors. When the tree arrives at the gaily decorated house, it is received to the accompaniment of firecrackers and instrumental music from the lu-sheng and so-na. The hosts kneels down to welcome the tree and blesses it with many lucky words in anticipation of a son. This is another reason why the Hua Miao perform the flower dance.

527 535 842

3) The Selection of a Mate. Many Miao choose their partners in life at the flower dance, and many parents follow their sons and daughters to the scene to observe whether the ones selected are satisfactory. After the event they would ask a

527 535 584

[198 cont.]
535 527 584 go-between to arrange the match. Therefore, young men and women everywhere try to make as many new clothes as possible to be worn on this occasion. The dancers sometimes change their clothes a few times a day. In short, the custom of the flower dance has prevailed for a long time. Some dance with the hope of acquiring children while others, among the illusive shadows and to the tune of scintillating music, look secretly but intently for his or her future mate. For the unmarried men and women the purpose of the flower dance is to seek a partner in life.

535 527 443 (II) The Market Dance. The market dance is also an important annual event with the Hua Miao and the Ch'ing Miao in this area. The dance is similar to the flower dance, except that it does not require a flower tree and that it has no fixed date and place. It is held generally after the transplantation of young rice-plants in the fourth or fifth month, or after the ripening of the crop in the seventh or eighth month. It is held [202] at the market fair, but the announcement is made at a previous fair by the host (or promoter, who is generally a Chinese) with two men, one beating a gong, and the other balancing a bamboo pole on his shoulder, on which is tied a belt with flower designs. This belt is presented as a souvenir by the girl to the boy when they talk love at the dance. When the two men circle around the fair once the crowd would know that the next one would be a market dance. On that occasion bands of men and women from all parts would come with new clothes as for the flower dance, men playing so-na and lu-sheng, and talking all the way. Arriving at the fair they would perch on the high mounds or stay in the low open ground outside the market place, playing musical instruments and singing songs. Young men and women take this opportunity to meet new friends or [199] renew old acquaintances. [243] The old people believe that the market dance in the fourth month, when the buckwheat and other grains flower, can encourage the yielding of more crops, and the market dance in the seventh month can bring about firmer and larger seeds. The market dance is known proverbially as the "grain dance," a name which clearly reveals its superstitious origin.

[165 cont.]

585 The ceremonies which accompany the conclusion of a "Méo" marriage are just so many excuses for feasts and drinking bouts.

When a young man has cast his choice upon a young woman, 584 he informs his father of his intentions. The latter selects two old men belonging to the family, whom he charges with going and making the official request in marriage. These two intermediaries, bearing gifts, go to the home of the young woman and are received by her father, who offers them food and drink. If this offer is made within the house, it means that the request is accepted in principle and that the terms may now be discussed. The neighbors are asked in and a small feast is held. (If the offer is made outside the house, it means that the request is not approved, the intermediaries content themselves with eating a morsel and drinking a small cup of alcohol, and withdraw without having entered the home.) The intermediaries then return to the home of the young man to announce the happy result of their mission and to participate in a series of feasts, which last for two days and to which all the relatives and friends of the fiancé are invited. The fiancé receives on this occasion all the gifts [583] which will enable him to make up the amount of the dowry agreed upon.

The engagements usually last only a short time. The "Méo" 585 [787] pay no attention to the agreement of the horoscopes. Upon the day [166] set for the marriage, the fiancé, accompanied by his friends and preceded by flute players, betakes himself to his fiancée's home, where he presents his gifts and where a monstrous feast begins which lasts throughout the day. The fiancée spends the night in her own house, surrounded by her friends, who aid her in making her preparations. The morning of the next day the fiancée dons her garments for grand ceremonies, which she generally wears only on that day. (If the fiancé is of another tribe, she assumes the costume of that tribe.) The cortege, formed of the two spouses accompanied by their friends of both sexes and preceded by "sen" players, goes to the home of the young man where the young wife is presented to her parents-in-law. In the tribes where ancestral worship is practiced, [769] the newlyweds prostrate themselves before the altar. Then begin the feasts, the dances, and the songs, which often last for several ∞ days, according to the resources of the fiancé. The young couple

[166 cont.]

591 The young couple either remains in the paternal home or found a new household, in accordance with their choice.

Other forms of marriage are also practiced by the "Méo." 583 When an official request in marriage has been refused, it is not rare to see the young people pay no attention to the consent of their parents and elope together. When they return they secure their pardon by paying an indemnity to the parents of the young woman.

A poor "Méo" may wed a rich girl. In this case it is the girl's [556] family that bears all of the expenses of the ceremony, but the married couple enter into a contract to serve this family for a number of years agreed upon.

584 In the region of Pha-Long, the "Méo" observe a rather curious 533 custom and hold a sort of "marriage fair," to which come, in great numbers, young men and young women from several leagues roundabout. This gathering is held on a grassy plateau where boys and girls form in groups about twenty paces apart, turning their backs to each other. These groups sing alternating choruses, very simple ones, in which the young men boast of their skill, their strength, and their wealth and the young women glorify their housekeeping virtues and enumerate the treasures of their trousseaux. Often some sprightly word causes mirth throughout the gathering. The laughter, the songs, and the dances of the men playing the "sen" last throughout the entire afternoon. The sellers of alcohol and cakes do a very good business, while the youths and maidens become better acquainted and establish a basis for future unions.

It is during the days which follow this festival that the great 584 majority of the official marriage requests are made. (Photo 154, Plate 40, shows the plateau where this marriage fair was held, near Pha-Long, on February 21, 1912. Photo 155, Plate 40 shows the dance of a "sen" player during the festival. Photos 156 and 157, Plate 40 show groups of young women [167] belonging to various "Meo" tribes of the region of Pha-Long who have come to the fair in question.)

595 Polygamy is authorized, although it is rare for the "Méo" to take a second wife, except when the first one remains sterile.

155: Abadie--241 G-5 (no date) 1924 AM1 Indochina
Miao AE5

[164]

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154. The "marriage fair" of the "Méo" of Pha-Long.

155. The Dance of the "Méo" "sen" Player.

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156.

157.

Groups of Young Women of Various "Méo" Tribes of the Pha-Long Region, Come to the Marriage Fair.

000 from their necklaces. They like dancing, songs and music. Their
533 instruments are the flageolet and flute with organ pipes or sen. The
534 latter is composed of a stout tube ending in a metal mouthpiece, in
535 the middle of which are inserted six organ pipes of varying length, pierced with holes at their base. To play this instrument one blows into the mouthpiece while holding the large tube in both hands at arm's length, at the same time closing certain of the holes on the organ pipes with the fingers. Thus nasal sounds resembling those of a bad accordion are obtained. This music is always accompanied by a somewhat grotesque dance in which the musician himself engages. Holding the instrument at arm's length in a very inconvenient way, he leans his body forward from the hips and, skimming over the ground with his feet, he starts hopping from one foot to the other, while turning about to the right or to the left. This heavy and graceless exercise reminds one of the dance of a bear at a fair. The Meo also play a small jew's-harp which is made up of a thin strip of brass
[562] which vibrates against the teeth. Women neither dance nor play musical instruments, but love to sing in shrill voices like a small girl, while working in the fields.

273 We shall see farther on that all the ceremonies are accompanie by feasts lasting several days. In addition in the high region the Meo /142/ have the reputation of being the mountaineers most inclined to drunkenness. Happily for the future of their race, the altitude at which they live and the arduous work to which they devote themselves are elements which combat the dangers of alcoholism.

844 Customs relative to childbirth are not remarkable. No sign
851 marks the house of a woman in confinement. A woman in labor seats
848 herself on a tabouret to give birth to her infant, assisted by her mother or midwife. If the new-born child is a boy, the placenta is buried in front of the main doorway, and if it is a girl, under the kitchen hearth As among the Tho, bastards are given a very poor reception. If an attempt to bring about an abortion has not been successful, the mother is forced to leave her infant to die of hunger.

584 Marriage preliminaries are shorter and less complicated than among the Tho. When a young man desires to wed a young woman, he tells his father about it, and he sends two of his men friends, selected from among older and respectable persons, carrying sticks of incense, in order to make the proposal. The sweet-smelling sticks are stuck into the soil and lighted in front of the doorway of the young woman's parents. If the master of the house offers a drink of alcohol

584 to the envoys outside the threshold, it means that the proposal is rejected. If, on the contrary, he invites them to enter, it is a sign that it has been received favorably. In this case the incense sticks are brought into the house and stuck into the ash-bowl of the ancestral altar. The neighbors are invited in and informed of the news, and the happy event is feted by emptying several cups of maize-brandy, while discussing the size of the dowry which should be brought by the young man and the day on which to have the wedding.

The intermediaries return to the fiance's house to inform his father of the result of their negotiations. Shortly after, a celebration is held there to inform relatives and friends of the good news, and the banquet continues for two or three days. Each guest brings the young man a small gift to assist him in paying his dowry, which frequently amountssto 100 piasters, 100 kilos of meat, as much brandy, and about ten chickens.

585 On the day set for the wedding, a procession is formed at the groom's house which /143/ includes at least six men and two women, and they go in procession to the young bride's home, preceded by musicians playing clarinet and flute. The feasting lasts all day long. The following night the dowry is put into the hands of the young woman's father, and on the morning of the next day they start out to return to the home of the young man's father. The bride, dressed in her finest garments, joins the procession, accompanied by relatives and friends, and followed by a servant carrying the small trunk in which her belongings are arranged. She is cheered along the way by the young folks from neighboring hamlets, perched on the rocks which border the paths. Before entering the husband's house, everyone is offered a loving-cup of brandy, which all drink from the neck of the same gourd. The young people prostrate themselves before the ancestral altar. A new feast awaits them, and the roistering continues for another two or three days. When the young man's family cannot meet considerable expense which a wedding imposes under usual conditions, they make a contract with the young woman's family under the terms of which the fiance will go and work in the home of his future father-in-law for two or three years.

When two sweethearts have decided to wed without the consent of their parents, they are compelled to flee the paternal roof, and go and establish a household in a forgotten corner of the mountain. At the end of a certain time they reappear before their parents, and the young man is forgiven by paying an indemnity to his father-in-law.

/61 cont./

A M 857 532 In general it can be said that the girls are better at representation than the boys, whereas the latter observe more accurately and are better able to express in detail the characteristic features of what is represented. In contrast to plastic representation, I did not see a single case of drawing. It never occurred to the children to draw /62/ either on the bark of trees or on paper, not even in the sand of the village square. It was only at my suggestion that they applied themselves to drawing (Ill. 67).[1] I shall discuss the interesting results in the chapter, "Art," section on "Painting, Sculpture, Ornamentation."

A M 526 [533] There are few games based on rules among the Meau, whereas the Akha know many (Ill. 20 and 21).[2] No songs, however, are sung in connection with them, if one does not count as such the positively infernal clamor set up especially among the Akha on such occasions. Otherwise, however, little is spoken during the games of the Akha and Meau, and they bother even less with explanations.

Whereas the Akha know nothing about any ball game, among the Meau it is by far the most popular pastime and is the only game described, even if incompletely, by Dhuraratsadorn (1), as well as being repeatedly mentioned in

1. Page 171.

M 526 628 584 the ancient Chinese literature. Children of all ages play ball. I saw small perhaps six-year-old girls, who were hardly able to throw the ball properly, playing just as eagerly as grown-up boys and girls. Usually the boys play against the girls, and, in the case of adults, the young men of one village against the girls of another, whose young men, in turn, visit the village deserted by the other boys, in order to entertain the girls who remained there with ball-playing.

Such, I might almost say official, visits between the villages occur only rarely during the year, chiefly in connection

1 [see cat. 116, p 511 - ANALYST]
2 [" " " p 110-111 - ANALYST]

/62 cont./

M 526 628 584 with the New Year's Festival (see the chapter, "Religion and Magic," section on "Cult and Taboo"). The young people, however, find this all the more reason to train diligently throughout the year.

M 526 584 The special popularity of the ball game is connected with the fact that it affords an opportunity for sexual approach in accordance with the rules of the game as set up by the adults. The young men form a line opposite the girls, and each fellow plays with the girl opposite him. A cloth ball about the size of a fist (Fig. 1) is thrown by a player to his female partner, and she has to catch it and throw it back (Ill. 69, 70).[4] If one does not /63/ succeed in catching the ball, a piece of clothing that is being worn must be given to the thrower. One can imagine that under these circumstances certain amusing complications are unavoidable if the game continues for some time. /Figs. 1-5 appear here./ One can often see a player fleeing almost naked into a house amidst the laughter of the spectators and then, clothed anew, continue the game.

M 526 ndi is the name for the Meau game with the shuttlecock, an original form of tennis (Ill. 72).[2] The ball (Fig. 2) consists of a small bamboo body (A) with feathers (B) fastened to it. The paddles are carved out of wood and are similar to our table-tennis paddles (Fig. 3 to Fig. 5). As in tennis, two or four players face each other; the two sides take their positions in the same way and try to bat the ball over a line drawn on the ground, which replaces the tennis net, to the opposing player. The following game also belongs to this group of games. The children toss pieces of wood into the air. As the pieces fall, they are immediately batted up into the air again with bats. The one who most frequently makes a success hit is the winner.

M 524 A [524] Among the Meau tŏlŭ is the name of the game with the wooden top (Fig. 6), which the Akha call tsă. The top /Fig. 6 appears here/ is no different from the one used by our European children (Ill. 19[3] and Fig. 6). Unlike the shuttlecock

[2 [See cat 116, P 512 - ANALYST]
[2 [" " " P 514 - "]
[3 [" " " P 109 - "]

/91 cont./

595 sleep." Another gave the opinion: "He enjoys himself with
833 several at the same time"; a third said: "The others look on."
513 Even though, as I /92/ could observe, the natives sleep so soundly as a rule that one can pull the sleeping mats from under the body or, as I literally experienced, can fire a gun without awakening them, still I cannot believe that young wives in particular sleep as soundly as my informants maintained. However, that may be, in any case it is certain that a woman never has intercourse with several men at the same time; the reverse is more likely.

183 As has been mentioned, among the Meau the public de-
836 mands chastity of young girls in order that the young men,
[562] whose marriage is desired as early as possible, will soon decide to take this step. This demand is untenable, however, for, on the one hand, the young men, as was discussed in detail, enjoy
[584] complete freedom, and, on the other hand, it is the boy who chooses a girl to marry. Since the girls, however, are censured only if caught in the act, they generally have no objection to premarital sexual intercourse, which they secretly submit to against the wish and will of their parents, although maintaining secrecy is very difficult if only for external reasons, in view of the smallness of the Meau villages. In fact, my informants laconically answered my question as to what they would do if they discovered that their daughters were having a love affair: "We could do nothing if there were no consequences." As far
[582] as I was able to observe, the girls take advantage of this situation, depending upon when they marry, which is usually at the age of twenty or twenty-one. Lajonquière (1) and Abadie (2),

1. II, p. 315.

2. Page 151.

for instance, write that "the virtue of the girls is not beyond reproach," and that in practice the Meau attach little importance to this fact.

/97 cont./

A 582 Among the Akha, the marriage age for both sexes is between the sixteenth and twentieth year.

e) Courtship and Betrothal

M 583 183 For a Meau boy there are several ways to marry a girl. A common way taken is probably the one whereby a boy loves a girl, she bears a child, and later the parents of both give their consent. This way does not conform to the demands of "public opinion" and is therefore not customary among respectable families. A second way is to go out looking for a wife.

M ●584 The young man visits the various villages and selects a girl. Then he goes to his father or to the head of his large /extended/ family and asks for his advice. The ancestors are queried about

M [787] it by way of an ordeal (see the chapter, "Religion and Magic," the section on "Magic, Soothsaying, Interpretation of Omens"). If the outcome of the ordeal is unfavorable, the young man drops the idea, but if the result is auspicious, he visits the girl's village again and asks her whether she consents to the proposed

M [836] marriage. If the girl agrees, she leaves her parents' home in great secrecy and sleeps with the young man in the house of his parents. The next day, the young man's parents visit the parents of the bride in order to inform them of the fact, and

M [574] they send them a pig. The latter for their part also now slaughter one and invite the relatives of the bridal couple to a feast. The two animals are eaten, rice liquor is copiously served, and the day for the wedding is set.

It often happens, however, that the girl refuses to leave her parents' house without their consent, that is to say, secretly. In this case, the young man /98/ asks his parents to visit the parents of the bride and ask for the girl. If the bride's parents give their consent, then everything is in order and the wedding day can be set. If the bride's parents do not give their permission, however, it is up to the girl to make the decision.

M [836] She can still decide to spend a night secretly with the boy in his parents' home or simply to have intercourse with him until

/98 cont./

584 she becomes pregnant. In both cases, the parents of the girl
[83C] will immediately withdraw their opposition.

583 It also happens in practice that the young people disregard all formalities and begin with cohabitation without consulting their parents. In this case, too, the parents of the girl can do nothing but belatedly approve of the accomplished fact.

584 593 When one considers all the various ways, it is apparent that the girl's parents cannot assert their will against that of the daughter. The father of the young man, on the other hand, into whose sib and, in most cases, household community the girl is to be received, can exert extensive influence upon the decision of his son. If the father or head of the family does not like the girl, he can ultimately give the refusal of the ancestors as a pretext, and no son will dare to undertake anything against their will.

583 584 In contrast to my observations, Lajonquière reports of the Meau in Indochina, as does Abadie (1) in almost the same words:

1. Page 166.

"It happens that marriages are concluded against the will of the parents. In this case the young people flee and, if they are found, pay an indemnity to the father of the girl. A small
[574] feast is celebrated, and everything is settled."

584 Marabail (2) makes the following statements on this

2. Page 459.

subject: "If a Meau wants to marry, he tells his father, without asking him for permission, for he is completely free. The father then sends two friends to the house of the girl's father. When they arrive, they plant two incense sticks in the ground in front of the door and light them. The master of the house
[574] then comes out and asks what they want. He listens to them, invites them to his room, and gives them something to drink. This is the sign that he has accepted the offer. As soon as the

/98 cont./

584 marriage /99/ proposal is accepted, the young man and his family go to the bride. There a celebration lasts all day and all night. Then they all go with the bride to the village of the young man."

When the villages are small and far apart, as they are particularly in the case of the Meau settlements in northern Thailand, which makes it difficult for the young man to find [648] a bride himself, one turns to a Chinese trader, and he serves as go-between, for which he is paid a special remuneration (see the present chapter, the section "Dissolution of Marriage," and the chapter, "Trade").

572 584 608 Moreover, child betrothals are also customary. It happens, especially among blood brothers or friends, that they decide to strengthen these bonds still more through a marriage of the children. This decision is often made when the children are still small, often soon after their birth. For confirmation, the father of the little groom sends a silver ring of the value of one silver piece to the father of the little girl. This child betrothal, however, does not force the young people to marry for the principle holds good that no one can be forced into marriage and the young people themselves should come to an agreement on this question. If later, for instance, one of the 572 584 608 614 686 partners of such an early betrothal refuses to honor the marriage promise given by the father, the latter arranges for a plenary assembly of the sib members, at which women as well as men participate. He presents the case, and the sib almost always decides to release the young people from the promise of their fathers. But even if the opposite decision were reached, the betrothed can still insist on their refusal. If it is the groom who refuses, no indemnity has to be paid; if the girl refuses, however, three pieces of silver have to be paid to the rejected bridegroom. One can designate such child betrothals as rare 184 584 among the Meau of Thailand, whereas Savina (1) reports from

1. II, p. 226.

Indochina that they are common there.

/101 cont./

184 584 Lajonquière (2) writes: "The wedding ceremonies seem to differ

2. II, p. 315.

somewhat in the details, but, taken as a whole, they are limited to the following: If a young man has his eye on a young girl, he informs his parents. His father selects two venerable men from his family to take gifts to the house of the girl. Among some Meau, these gifts consist of a small pig and alcohol; among others they are simply incense candles, which the go-betweens, as soon as they have arrived at the door, stick in the ground and light. In both cases, the father of the girl steps out- [574] side the door and /102/ invites the emissaries to partake of food [201] and drink. If he has the food served to them outside the house, it means that the proposal is rejected. If he asks them to step inside, the invitation itself means that it has been accepted and that the marriage formalities can be discussed immediately." [114] These statements were borrowed almost verbatim by Abadie (1).

1. Page 165.

184 574 585 Lajonquière (2) then continues very explicitly: "A great

2. II, p. 316.

feast, or rather a series of feasts which last two days, is prepared. Two days of joy, during which all the friends and relatives, called together from afar, bring gifts to the bridegroom, which enable him to supplement the very substantial bridal gift which he has to give to the parents of his future wife. [583] This bridal gift sometimes is made up of 100 silver piasters, 100 kilograms of whiskey, a pig weighing one hundred kilograms, chickens, and so forth.

"When the day finally arrives, the young man, accompanied by his friends (there must be at least six men and two women), offers his gifts. The procession is gay on its journey and is led by mouth-organ players. A festive meal awaits them in the bride's house.

/102 cont./

184 in the bride's house. This is the last night that the young
585 woman will spend with her girl friends in her parents' home. The next day, the bride in festive garb, and, if the bridegroom belongs to a tribe different from hers, in the garb of his tribe, goes to the house of her father-in-law in the company of a large crowd of friends of both sexes. Behind her a friend carries a chest with her belongings. The procession, in all the colors of the rainbow and accompanied by the sound of instruments, sets out along the slopes while the inhabitants of the neighboring hamlets shout greetings down from the rocks which line the route.

"The ceremony takes place in the house of the young man through the introduction of the bride to her parents-in-law
[782] and through the invocation of ancestors before the altar, if this
[769] custom is practiced in the region concerned, for in several regions it is completely absent, and furthermore principally through dances, singing, and entertainments, which, depending on the means of the bridegroom, may last one or several days."

/103/ Abadie (1) borrows this description almost verbatim,

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1. Page 166.

but adds that the young married couple have the choice of either starting an independent household or staying in the house of the bridegroom's father. The other authors and I myself did not find that the young couple was allowed to make this decision.

184 Dhuraratsadorn (2) makes his description shorter: "The
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[584]

2. Page 168.

father or the go-between must be the first to go forth and ask the bride's father for the hand of his daughter. All the preparations for the wedding are then made by the bride's parents. On the wedding day, the bride's father or the go-between leads

/104/

114 may perhaps be true for certain regions where the Meau find
184 themselves in especially tight economic straits. Dhuraratsa-
595 dorn (1) probably writes more accurately: "A man may take

1. Page 169.

as many wives as he wishes, but he needs the permission of his chief wife to do so. The concubines have to work for the husband and the chief wife like ordinary servants." Savina (2) adds that

2. II. p. 226.

polygamy is widespread among some tribes of the Meau, but is unknown among others.

583 Among the Meau the bride price plays an important role;
614 the entire large /extended/ family of the young husband helps
[596] to raise it. If the wife should for any reason later return to her parents, they must pay it back. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the sib is very interested in the good conduct of the married couple and is intent on not letting dissension between the young people become serious.

184 Abadie (3) reports on a strange custom which he describes
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3. Page 166.

as follows from the Meau of the Pha-Long region: "They arrange a kind of marriage market. Here young men and girls, who have come from the surrounding area for several miles, meet one another. This meeting takes place on a plateau covered with grass. The young men and girls form groups which, at a distance of about twenty paces, turn their backs to each other. [533] These groups sing simple antiphonal songs in which the young men boast of their skill, strength, and wealth, while the young girls extol their housewifely virtues and the richness of their trousseau. A droll word often arouses general merriment; the laughter, singing, and dancing of the men, who play the

AKha AO4
Miao AE5

M 184 584 /104 cont./ mouth organ, last throughout the afternoon. The vendors of alcohol and cakes do a thriving business while the young men and girls become more closely acquainted and lay the basis for a future union... During the days which follow this festival most of the official marriage proposals are made."

M 184 583 Lajonquière (4) describes a custom which is likewise un-

4. II, p. 315.

known among the Meau of Thailand: "The 'Notice von Quan-Ba' says that as soon as the marriage is arranged the young man serves for two years in the house of his future /105/ father-in-law and that the marriage is finally settled only at the end of this period, after both parties have had a chance to become acquainted with each other."

A 584 [301] Among the Akha there are two kinds of betrothal. The most common kind is the silent betrothal; the young people simply agree to marry. In this case the young man gives the girl one or several silver arm-rings, depending on his means, and the girl gives him a small gift in return. Such betrothals can also be broken off without much ado; the party breaking off the betrothal gives the gifts back to the other party, who, however, keeps the gifts given to him.

In the case of a public betrothal, however, the father of the bridegroom asks the bride's father for his daughter's hand. In general it is the young man who initiates this marriage offer, requesting his father to undertake the proposal. It also happens, however, that a father seeks to obtain the hand of a girl for his son without obtaining the consent of the son in advance. In each of the two cases the bride's father asks his daughter. If she accepts the proposal, the go-between, that is, the father of the young man, is given a bottle of alcohol. This means that the betrothal is concluded and cannot simply be dissolved without the agreement of the other party. If one party breaks

A [686] off the betrothal, the father of the other party has to be paid a large pig and 11 pieces of silver (ticals) as an indemnity from